

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

BUS DRIVERS

CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDE - NUMBER 2
2002

INTEREST AREA
MECHANICAL - SKILLED OCCUPATIONS



WHAT DOES A BUS DRIVER DO?

BUS DRIVERS drive gasoline, diesel, or electric vehicles to carry people either within or between cities. They operate buses for local transit systems, inter-city bus companies, and tour bus companies. (School Bus Drivers are described separately in *California Occupational Guide* #578 - School Bus Drivers.)

All Bus Drivers keep records such as the distance traveled, driving time, and total amount of fares received. They also report any mechanical problems or major needed repairs, may keep the bus clean, and may make minor repairs while on the road.

Local Transit Drivers

Local Transit Drivers perform the following tasks:

- Transport passengers along scheduled routes, usually within an urban area.
- Collect and hand out transfers.
- Keep eye on cash box for correct fare.
- Verify that bus passes are valid.
- May make change for passengers.
- May call out names of major streets along their route.
- Answer questions regarding routes, schedules, transfer points, and fares.

Inter-City Drivers

Tasks performed by Inter-City drivers include:

- Transport passengers between cities.
- Relate schedules, routes, fares, and other information concerning the trips.
- May pick up and drop off packages.
- May collect cash fares.

Charter Bus Drivers

Tasks that Charter Bus Drivers perform include:

- Take a group of people to their destination.
- Generally remain at the location until the group is ready to return.



- May travel long distances for several days at a time.

Shuttle Bus Drivers

Important tasks for Shuttle Bus Drivers are:

- Drive buses of various sizes between a set destination and passengers' homes. Set destinations can include health clinics, adult day care centers, hotels, fairgrounds, airport terminals, and parking lots.
- Keep to time schedules and route assignments.
- Ensure clients have seat belts fastened properly and wheelchair brakes are locked.
- May lift luggage and personal belongings to and from the bus to help passengers.
- Use hydraulic lifts and own strength to safely help clients on and off bus and into buildings.
- Keep a daily log on passengers served.
- Do routine mechanical checks on the vehicle such as checking brakes, windshield wipers, hydraulic lifts, etc., as well as add gasoline or oil regularly.
- May use cellular phone or radio device to report interruption of service or request medical help.
- May do other duties such as custodial and building maintenance.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Bus Drivers have the following skills, knowledge, and abilities:

- **Reaction Time** – The ability to quickly respond (with the hand, finger, or foot) to one signal (sound, light, picture, etc.) when it appears.
- **Far and Near Vision** – The ability to see things close at hand (such as signs) or at a distance.
- **Social Perceptiveness** – Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do.
- **Operation and Control** – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- **Speaking** – Talking to others to effectively convey information.

- **Equipment Maintenance** – Performing routine maintenance and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Current laws limit driving time to a maximum of ten consecutive hours. Drivers who work a ten-hour shift may experience fatigue, particularly when driving in poor driving conditions. All Bus Drivers can be subject to occasional stress caused by disagreeable or disorderly passengers. Also, they may experience stress from long hours of driving combined with factors such as bad weather, heavy traffic conditions, time schedule commitments, and delays. Local Transit Drivers may be subject to injuries received from physical attacks, disorderly conduct among passengers, and robberies.

Union Membership

Most Inter-City and many local Transit Bus Drivers are members of the Amalgamated Transit Union. In large cities, Local Transit Bus Drivers sometimes belong to the Transport Workers Union of America. Some Drivers belong to the United Transportation Union and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 1998:	32,100
Estimated number of workers in 2008:	37,600
Projected Growth 1998-2008:	17.1%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	6,200
<i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i>	

The number of Bus Drivers in California is projected to grow slower than average compared with all occupations between the years 1998 and 2008. Between 1993 and 1998, the number of licensed Bus Drivers in California grew by nearly 11,000, about 51 percent in the five-year period.

Trends

Charter bus tourism and shuttle bus use are on the rise in California, mainly due to the aging population. This has caused the numbers of these types of Bus Drivers to increase in recent years.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Bus Drivers 2001 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$10.17	to	\$16.77
Average hourly wage	\$13.48		
Average annual wage	\$28,021		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.*

Charter Bus Drivers and Shuttle Bus Drivers generally earn less than transit or Inter-City Bus Drivers do; however, they often earn tips from passengers to add to their wage.

Hours

Inter-City and Charter Bus Drivers are often on call, work weekends, or can be away from home for several days on extended trips. Work may not be available year-round for Charter Bus Drivers since demand for this type of transportation declines during winter months and increases during spring, summer, and autumn.

Benefits

Benefits usually include medical and dental insurance, holiday and vacation pay, and retirement programs.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Many employers prefer high school graduates and require a written test of ability to follow bus schedules. Most inter-city bus companies and local transit systems give driver trainees two to eight weeks of classroom and "behind the wheel" instruction.

While many bus companies do not require prior bus-driving experience, some employers require successful completion of a company-sponsored driver training school.

Employers require a good driving record. Some employers require drug testing prior to hiring, and may test employees at random.

Applicants must be able to read schedules, baggage tags, express labels, traffic and road condition signs, and keep accident and mileage record reports.

Because Bus Drivers deal with passengers, they must be courteous.

Licensing and Certification

Transit, Inter-City, Tour, and Shuttle Bus Drivers in vehicles that carry more than ten passengers must get a California Class B with passenger endorsement driver's license. Requirements for this license are listed in the Class B Licensing Handbook obtainable at any California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office.

To qualify for the required Class B permit and license to carry passengers, applicants must be able to pass a pre-employment physical examination and must have good eyesight with or without corrective lenses. Bus Drivers need a physical exam every two years.

The legal minimum age is 18 to drive a bus within the State. Drivers must be at least 21 to drive a bus across state lines. Drivers over 70 must pass an annual exam.

Tour bus companies require Bus Drivers to get a Tour Bus Certificate from the DMV. For shuttle vans carrying fewer than ten passengers, a California Class C standard driver's license is usually sufficient.

Continuing Education

Bus Drivers renew their licenses every five years. Continuing education classes are not required for this occupation.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Bus Lines, Bus Tours, and Buses – Charter and Rental. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at



www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Bus Drivers can promote from part-time status to full time after a period of months or years on the job with an employer. Companies that operate on different shifts often start newly employed Drivers in less desirable time periods such as early morning or evening shifts. Seniority can lead to a choice of shifts. Sometimes, a Bus Driver can promote into management.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Department of Motor Vehicles
Commercial Driving License Unit
P.O. Box 944278 – MS-G204
Sacramento, CA 94244-2780
(916) 657-5771
www.dmv.ca.gov

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Forklift Operators	No. 190
Truck Drivers, Heavy	No. 255
School Bus Drivers	No. 578

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)

Bus Drivers, Transit, and Intercity 53-3021

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)

Bus Drivers, Transit, and Intercity 53-3021.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)

Bus Drivers 97108

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)

Bus Driver 913.463-010